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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates how various technologies have constructed the reasoning of teaching and schooling in contemporary Japan. The paper contends that (1) the construction of the teacher and the student in Japan involves a complexity of power relations; (2) schooling is not simply controlled by the government through its sovereign power, but is shaped by multiple technologies; and (3) a variety of self-surveillance and self-disciplining techniques are a part of the schooling mode. The primary archives of this study are the most recent teacher guidelines issued by the Ministry of Education of Japan which include "Gakusyushidoyoryo" (the "Course of Study"), together with some other statements of guidance. The theoretical orientation of the study is Michel Foucault's conception of power. Foucault's notion of power is that a multiplicity of actions engenders power, and power operates through discourse associated with the constructions of knowledge. Moreover, Foucault's conception of "governmentality" allows the rethinking of relationships among self, other, and institutional discourse. This study concludes by pointing out the importance of being skeptical about educational reform regarding autonomy and freedom. Providing new space for teachers and students may only create new technologies that construct teachers and students according to new disciplinary modes. (Author/SM)

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THE REASONING OF TEACHING AND SCHOOLING IN JAPAN: USING FOUCAULT TO EXPLICATE DISCOURSE

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Article Abstract

This paper investigates how various technologies have constructed the reasoning of teaching and schooling in contemporary Japan. I argue: a) the construction of the teacher and the student in Japan involves a complexity of power relations, b) schooling is not simply controlled by the government through its sovereign power but is shaped by multiple technologies, and c) a variety of self-surveillance and self-disciplining techniques are a part of the schooling mode. The primary archives of this study are the most recent teacher guidelines issued by the Ministry of Education of Japan which includes *Gakusyushidoyoryo*, known in English as the *Course of Study*, together with some other statements of guidance. The theoretical orientation of this study is Foucault's conception of power. Foucault's notion of power is that a multiplicity of actions engenders power, and power operates through discourse associated with the constructions of knowledge. Moreover, Foucault's conception of "governmentality" allows us to rethink the relationships among self, other, and institutional discourse. This study concludes by pointing out that we have to be skeptical about educational reform regarding autonomy and freedom. Providing new space for teachers and students may only create new technologies that constructs teachers and students according to new disciplinary modes.

THE REASONING OF TEACHING AND SCHOOLING IN JAPAN: USING FOUCAULT TO EXPLICATE DISCOURSE[1]

The purpose of this study is to use particular documents to investigate how various technologies have constructed the reasoning of teaching and schooling in contemporary Japan. In the past decade, education reform in Japan has tended to focus on the issue of teacher's and student's autonomy and freedom. The major educational discourse criticizes the Ministry of Education of Japan for restraining teachers and students through ideological control. The Ministry of Education responded by issuing a new version of teacher guidance to assert that teachers and students are given sufficient autonomy and freedom and that there is no ideological control in the school.

This paper does not try to define whether the Japanese teachers and students have freedom of thought, but it seeks to disturb what has been taken for granted about school instructions and student nature. I argue: i) the construction of the teacher and the student in Japan involves a complexity of power relations, ii) schooling is not simply controlled by the government through its sovereign power but is shaped by multiple technologies, and iii) a variety of self-surveillance and self-disciplining techniques are a part of the schooling mode. This study will conclude by pointing out that we have to be skeptical about educational reform regarding autonomy and freedom. Providing new space for teachers and students may only create new technologies that constructs teachers and students according to new disciplinary modes.

The primary archives of this study are the most recent teacher guidelines issued by the Ministry of Education of Japan which includes *Gakusyushidoyoryo*, known in English as the *Course of Study*, together with some other statements of guidance.[2] The theoretical orientation of this study is Foucault's conception of power. Foucault's notion of power is that a multiplicity of actions engenders power, and power operates through discourse associated with the constructions of knowledge. Moreover,

Foucault's conception of "governmentality" allows us to rethink the relationships among self, other, and institutional discourse.

Major Recent Debates about Japanese Teachers and Their Theoretical Orientation

In Japan, teachers have always been one of the focal points of educational debates. The major literature on teachers in Japan can be divided into two types: criticizing teachers for a lack of critical thinking abilities in their students, and appealing for freedom of the teachers. Periodically, international assessments of student performance are carried out. These assessments compare students from various countries. The comparison between Japanese students and American students often focuses on the superior performance of Japanese students over American students in certain areas.

However, Japanese students are often criticized for their lack of critical thinking abilities. In response, teachers are blamed for this aspect of students' shortcomings. There are various examples of such criticisms. For example, teachers neglect differences in individual ability and produce passive learners (Amano, 1995; Horio, 1988). Most of the teachers are conservative and have no passion for education (Nishino, 1992). Another criticism is that teachers have the absolute power over students, therefore, they not only control students' behavior but also their dress, hair style, after school activities, etc. The relationship between teachers and students does not rely on trust but power (Komano, 1986).

Another debate about teachers is that the Ministry of Education has restrained teachers' freedom of teaching and research activities (Amano, 1995; Horio, 1988, 1994; Ota, 1989; Nishio, 1992). Horio (1988), one of the representative educators in Japan, protested about the administrative control:

> Ministry ideologues have produced a number of legal theories designed to validate their repressive positions. It is not surprising, moreover, to find that

> their administratively controlled in-service training is itself largely given over to discussions of how to apply this legal ideology as a tool of educational control. (p. 248)

He considers power and control to be associated with ideological issues. Furthermore, Horio (1988) exposed the government control of in-service training: "Great stress is placed in the training of new teachers upon their obligation to yield to, and obey the dictates of, their superiors in the administrative hierarchy of the school system. . . ." (p. 252). Teachers have no autonomy in areas such as curriculum planning and textbook selection. They have to follow the Course of Studies very carefully to plan lessons. Teachers are not allowed to bring their own ideological doctrines into the classroom.

Of course, there are many other debates about teachers; however, the above two debates are very conspicuous in Japan. Although these two debates seem to be dissimilar, they follow the same pattern. They question who has power and who does not have it. The one who has power controls or restrains the one who does not have it. This power dynamic is known as sovereign power. The theoretical orientation of these two debates is related to Marxism or neo-Marxism.[3] Power, for Marxist educators in Japan is an ideological issue, and power can be possessed.[4] In exploring domination, power was not seen in terms of relation between the dominant and the dominated but primarily in terms of who dominates whom and who has power .

Regarding teacher educational reform, Japanese Marxist educators argued that the state employed its sovereign or repressive power to seek increasing bureaucratic control of teaching and curricula. Amano (1995) and Horio (1994) asserted that from the middle 1950s to the 1990s, the top-down teacher educational reform reduced teachers' autonomy. He argued that it has caused a crisis of teacher education. In teacher education, sovereign power has become more intense, curricula and teaching have become completely determined from the top, and testing has become more important.

The analyses of sovereign power became the weapon for the advocates of "the sociology of school knowledge" which emerged in the 1970s among Marxist educators in the United States and Great Britain, and it spread to the field of education in Japan, too. In the argument of the sociology of school knowledge, sovereign power is used to "explain the origins of domination and subjugation in society" (Popkewitz and Brennan, 1998, p. 17). The Japanese advocates of the sociology of school knowledge see curriculum as socially and politically organized knowledge. Government policies permeate classroom curricula, textbooks, etc. which represent certain groups' interests. Knowledge tended to be seen as an ideological issue. Horio (1994) and some other Marxist educators consider the concept of ideology either as the logic of domination or as a method of inquiry designed to uncover how domination works in the interest of capitalist rationality. They view schools as hegemonic institutions. Through textbooks and curricula approved by Ministry of Education, schools and teachers play a significant role in maintaining social control through ideological means. The way in which the schools function as ideological agents can be seen by examining the schools as institutions, the role of knowledge, and teachers function as mediating forces between the summit of power and the everyday structuring of classroom experiences. According to Horio, school knowledge is seen as cultural and ideological hegemony, which is a form of social collectivity, selected from the universe of knowledge.

In sum, in the case of Japan, the most distinguishing characteristic of Marxist educational theorists is the assumption of agency and the positing of domination and resistance. Since in the theory the only possibility for resistance is in the human agent who can resist domination, Marxian writers must interpolate an agentive characteristic that cannot be dominated. If there were no agent in Marxian theory, revolution would not be possible and the dominant force would take over everything. However, Marxian theorists do not explain how power can dominate some parts of human life but not other parts.

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Foucault's Conception of Power

For Foucault, power is neither an ideological concern, nor a domain dominated by one social group over others, but exists only as it is exercised. This can be seen in the following text from *The History of Sexuality*:

> By power , I do not mean "Power" as a group of institutions and mechanisms that ensure the subservience of the citizens of a given state. By power, I do not mean, either, a mode of subjugation which, in contrast to violence, has the form of the rule. Finally, I do not have in mind a general system of domination exerted by one group over another, a system whose effects, through successive derivation, pervade the entire social body....It seems to me that power must be understood in the first instance as the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization; as the support which these force relations find in one another, thus forming a chain or a system, or on the contrary, the disjunction and contradictions which isolate them from one another.... (p. 92)

Foucault uses the term "force relations" to assert that one should analyze power not by its central locations, as regulated and legitimated forms, but at the level of "those continuous and uninterrupted processes which subject our bodies, govern our gestures, dictate our behaviors" (Foucault, 1986, p. 233). For Foucault, power cannot be possessed, but it is something that exists only in action. A multiplicity of actions engenders power, and power operates through discourse associated with the construct of knowledge. Discourse is an exercise of power, power produces knowledge, and power is a productive network in society. Knowledge is always reshaped and reconstructed when power is exercised through language, institutions, habits and beliefs.

Through some of Foucault's work, such as *The History of Sexuality*, *Discipline and Punish* and other later essays, we can find two emergent types of power: sovereign power and disciplinary power. Each of these powers was involved in particular

configurations of the state and the society. First, sovereign power, or traditional power, is connected with the territorial state, the society of laws. Its characteristic is the interplay of regulation and obligation. Second, disciplinary power is exercised through institutions, such as schools, armies or factories. This type of power serves the administrative state and regulates society.

In contrast, governmentality is a technique of disciplinary power, and is an art of governing. It is a regime which is dedicated to the management of population and the economy, and it is identified with the governmental state and with "a type of society controlled by apparatuses of security" (Foucault, 1991, p. 104). According to Foucault, governmentality first emerged in France in the eighteenth century. The technologies of government, including populational reasoning, voting, and participation, construct self-disciplined subjects. The existence of a liberal democratic government requires a self-disciplined population. Therefore, people who identify themselves with self-governing require a liberal democratic government. Foucault has defined the term governmentality: "This contact between the technologies of domination of others and those of the self I call governmentality" (Foucault, 1988, p. 19).

Governmentality is diffused throughout modern society. It produces knowledge/truth through multifarious social institutions and experts, at a distance in both constitutional and spatial senses. In the beginning of the twentieth century, in the United States and in some European countries, social reform movements were prominent. A crucial link in the changing patterns of social organization was the professionalization of knowledge. The governments of these countries have been relying on the research of experts, especially psychologists, to gather support for the new policies.

Although governmentality is a historical term applied to France, the Japanese version still can be found. Specialists in Japan have controlled and changed the way Japanese believe they should raise children as well as numerous other aspects of people's daily behavior in order to make people into productive and rational citizens.

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This process is similar to what Nikolas Rose (1994) has described about the British:

> On one hand, doctors, psychologists, health visitors and others would grid the family and its activities with new ways of visualizing and judging childhood and children, in which normality would become simultaneously that which was natural and that which was to be safeguarded and produced through the knowledgeable management of child-rearing by the ordinary mother surrounded by the experts who she can and will trust. On the other hand around the problem family, experts would seek to mobilize the power of the state in order to realize the dream of a rationalized and comprehensive system of services exercising a continuous educational scrutiny over the potentially dangerous household (p. 377).

Expert knowledge is couched in scientific terms. It sinks deeply into the populace's mind through propaganda, mass media and so on. For example, dieting is a very popular word in Japanese which does not only relate to the creation of beauty but also is a scientific term which expresses health and ambition. Thus, governmentality is the economy of normalizing people in society.

By using Foucault's theory, we can take very different routes to understand schooling, teaching and teachers from Marxian educators. On the one hand, Marxian educators view school as continuing to reproduce unfair and unjust institutions, and to assert that ideology shapes schooling. Foucaultian educators, on the other hand, argue that the notion of schooling is contingently constructed and reconstructed by various technologies of power/knowledge.

Multiple Technologies Normalizing Teaching and Learning

In this section, I explore that the construction of teaching and learning in Japan not as an ideological product but a discourse that involves a complexity of power relations. Schooling is not simply under the control of the governmental sovereign power but is

shaped by multiple technologies, and a variety of internal self-surveillance and self-disciplinary techniques are a part of schooling. What I consider the normalizing of the student are not such things as school regulations which legitimately restrain the student, but the multiple technologies that discursively construct the student.

One of the normalizing technologies is language. Teachers are encouraged to use positive expressions to promote students' self-advancement. The Ministry of Education has instructed teachers with the following guidelines:

> Teachers recognize all students individually, encourage them and often praise students for their improvement. Students, therefore, will have the feeling of satisfaction about their efforts and have strong will to challenge the next task (Monbusyo, 1985, p. 22; my translation).

At the same time, the strategy of using positive expressions normalizes teachers as those whose praise will have a motivating effect on students, and it normalizes students as those who need motivation and whose motivation is subject to a teacher's praise. The example of a teacher directing students to use positive words can be found in a teacher training textbook published by the Ministry of Education (Monbusyo, 1989, pp. 35-40). A elementary first grade teacher let students encourage each other. When someone faces a difficult task, others say "*ganbare* (working hard)" to cheer them on. Positive phrases, such as "good job" , "nice student", and "kind child", fly pass each other in the classroom. One student who was praised by others said: "I'm so happy. It makes me feel confident."

Another technology which influences the reasoning of the student is writing journals. Students keep writing journals every day, and hand them in to the teacher once a week. According to a teacher guidelines issued by the Ministry of Education, the contents of journal should be what students did during the day and what they thought about the things they did. After reading students' journals, the teacher writes down his or her comments. One teacher guideline suggests how teachers can reform

the "problematic"students by responding to their journals:

> a) (The teacher) lets the student look straight at his/her present conduct, and helps the student figure out whether this conduct was compelled by others or caused by his or her own will.
> b) While trying not to control the student's free thinking, (the teacher) stimulates the student to judge whether his/her present conduct is the best choice for himself/herself and the society.
> c) If the student realizes that his/her conduct is not desirable, (the teacher) suggests to the student that s/he make a new conduct plan, and that it is important to make the plan achievable in order to have a successful experience.
> d) (The teacher) intently watches the student's action and encourages the student. (The teacher) praises the student for his/her improvement. When the student did not materialize his/her plan, (the teacher) does not blame or punish the student but advises him/her to make a new plan (Monbusyo, 1990, p. 46, My translation).

This strategy of how to save the problematic students provides teachers with a normalizing psychological management of students. Control without control, the technique of governing at a distance is, as Robert Castel (1991) says, "a system of prevention [that is] perfect enough to dispense with both repression and assistance, thanks to its capability to forward-plan social trajectories from a scientific evaluation of individual abilities"(p. 296). It is through writing a journal that students are discursively constructed and normalized by the coded value which inscribed in the teacher's response. The reasoning of what is desirable or undesirable behavior is embedded in the social context, and the technology of confession and self-examination constructs the mode of self-discipline.

Generally speaking, Japanese students are famous for their collective behavior. They wear the same uniform, eat the same school meals, and act alike. For Japanese,

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this disposition tends to be praiseworthy, whereas many foreigners see it as enigmatic. What I am concerned about here is not to judge whether this behavior is good or bad but about what technologies effect the value of group-orientation.

In Japan, cleaning classrooms and schoolyards is naturally understood as the students' job. The cleaning activities in Japanese schools is not for the sake of hardening students body but for disciplining students' soul. A teacher-training textbook published by the Ministry of Education demonstrates how a first year class improved students' group consciousness through cleaning classrooms (Monbusyo, 1989, pp. 96-101). Choosing a job and figuring out how to accomplish it in a group developed the idea that the group belongs to all and everyone belongs to the group, which means each individual's work contributes to the entire group while the group is the reason why the each individual exists. The students learned the proper behavior of being a group member, that is, self-confidence, recognition of others and cooperation.

Meeting is another strategy for developing collective consciousness. The Ministry of Education instructs schools and teachers that "[For students,] listening to the principal's and the head teacher's moral discourse in the morning, a whole school meeting is effective in cultivating the habit of collective activities such as paying attention to others' speech and forming ranks" (Monbusyo, 1985, pp. 23). The following example given by the Ministry of Education has shown how group activities changed a student's group awareness (Monbusyo, 1989, pp. 108-113).

There was a elementary third grade male student who was considered to lack a collective spirit. He often joked around during group activities, was irresponsible about his job, and took no interest in class events when he thought he had nothing to do with those events. The teacher conducted a robot-making event whose purpose was to increase this student's group awareness since "holding down, tying up and pasting, all this work needs other people's help" (Monbusyo, 1989, p. 111, my translation). The male student worked with some other students. "While making the robot, he not only had fun but also recognized that he belonged to the group" (Monbusyo, 1989, p. 113, my translation).

Language, journal writing, cleaning and group activities, as the technologies of student management, are only examples that the Ministry of education instruct schools and teachers to apply. These technologies discursively construct and normalize the "reasonable" students as: hard-working, kind, cooperative and having collective awareness. Such reasonableness has become the Japanese students' nature, and this nature has been often taken for granted. There is nothing natural, necessary or inevitable about the present Japanese students' nature. The value as to what is considered reasonable, of course, is socially constructed and historically contingent.

The Pupil as a Self-disciplined Subject

Foucault's conception of power has provided for a complexity of power relations. In the governmental state, individuals are not only the target or object of government. The relationship between governing and the governed is a complex one. Individuals are simultaneously governed subjects, and take part in their own governing. Individuals become "the correlate and instrument" of the governmental state (Burchell, 1991, p. 127). On the one hand, the state outlines a possible art of government which reckons on numerous techniques for disciplining individuals to be rational citizens. Taking care of one s own health, hygiene and education, for example, are responsibilities of reasoning citizens. On the other hand, individuals have shifted from rationally-governed subjects to spontaneous problem-solvers, that is, they practice the appropriate forms of "technologies of the self".

Japanese students are at once governed and disciplined by teachers and are involved in the practice of self-governing and self-disciplining. The Ministry of Education has elaborated strategies for teachers: Disciplining students is for the purpose of making students self-disciplined. By exercising self-discipline, students approach self-understanding, self-esteem and self-actualization (Monbusyo, 1982, p. 44; my translation). This type of power relation is a complicated one. It is the opposite of the traditional sovereign power issue which assumes that power comes from the top and that power is employed by the sovereign to rein in the populace. The new type of

power is origin-unknown. Power only exits when it is exercised, and power circulates.

Self-discipline requires self-motivation. The following story appeared in the teacher training textbook issued by the Ministry of Education. It is about an elementary fifth grade teacher working with a male student who had poor grades in all subjects (Monbusyo, 1989, pp. 89-95). The teacher concluded that the lack of self-motivation and self-esteem were the main reasons which prevented him from studying. In a mathematics class, the teacher wrote questions on the board and let students solve them individually. Seeing that the male student had difficulty solving the problem, the teacher softly put a hint card on his table. Finally, the student solved the problem. The teacher let him present his result to the whole class. It made him felt very honored. Since then, the male student started to work hard on mathematics not only at school but also at home. He became enthusiastic about his study and "enjoyed" hard-working. By the end of the semester, he improved all his studies.

The relationship between discipline and self-discipline is an intricate one. Discipline is to train the students to practice self-discipline for their own good. The technologies of discipline are whose which try to make students be enthusiastic about the task, enjoy the working process and finally acquire self-esteem. However, this practice of self-discipline is engaged in the actualization of discipline.

The Ministry of Education teacher guidelines have shown how such discipline can be exercised by the students (Monbusyo, 1989, pp. 54-60). A elementary second grade homeroom teacher struggled to change students' attitude to the whole class and the lessons. The teacher let students list what kinds of things have happened in the class which made them uncomfortable, and furthermore discussed how to prevent them from happening again. The students "spontaneously" decided on: a) making a carp streamer and putting it up in the classroom; b) making strips on which to write rules and hang the strips on the carp streamer; c) putting one strip into the carp when the rule has been followed by all class members; d) taking out the strip from the carp if anyone broke the rule; and e) the rules written on the strips would be decided by the entire class.

The following five rules were made: a) do not exclude anyone from group games; b) share the class ball and long rope with others; c) sit down in the chairs and wait until the bell rings for class; d) do not laugh when someone's answer is wrong; and e) prepare for the next lesson during the break. The first item was followed and the corresponding strip was put into the carp streamer in the first week. Students were looking forward to seeing the swollen carp streamer. By the end of the semester, all strips were put into the carp streamer. Putting strips into the carp streamer, as the teacher concluded, is instilling the rules into students' soul. Although the rules became invisible, they were deeply engraved in the students' minds. Thus, the students practiced the self-discipline according to the teacher's expectations, but in a set-up that made it seem as though the students had chosen the rules themselves.

The distinctive feature of self-discipline in Japanese schools tends to be self-classification, that is, one knows how to apply oneself to classified categories, such as the "problem student", "not self-motivated" or "lacking group awareness" according to the advisory teacher. Then, the classified individual disciplines him/herself to be the normal or natural student in the "normal" classroom discourse. People who practice self-discipline must believe that it is for their own good. The process of practicing self-discipline is enjoyable; at least one is made to feel that it is enjoyable and fulfilling.

Some Concluding Notes

One may wonder if there is no absolute freedom and autonomy in the modern society if the modern individual involves a self-discipline and this self-discipline is exercised through desires and pleasures. As we have explored, multiple technologies have constructed the reasoning of teaching and schooling in Japan, any assumption of absolute freedom and autonomy must be problematized. Using Foucault's conception of power to rethink the production of reason, we can read educational discourse differently. Instead of using traditional approaches that tend to identify what is in need of reform, the use of Foucault's theory allows us to open up new spaces of possibility for understanding how the production of reason occurred. Reforming and

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providing a new space for teachers and students may only create a new technology to shape teachers and students.

Skepticism can be useful when we read educational reform discourse. Enhancing teachers' freedom and autonomy may simultaneously reduce teachers' and students' freedom and autonomy. Empowering teachers and students may construct just another form of disciplined teachers and students. Student-oriented teaching may simultaneously exclude students from learning. Normalizing and naturalizing students may at the same time create new opportunities for interruptions. [Almost] Nothing is absolute. All of the reform movements are complex, that is, they engender inclusion and exclusion at the same moment. What we have to do is to analyze the particular ways the technologies of discipline produce particular values of "normal" and "not normal" teachers and students.

Endnotes

1 I wish to express my appreciation to Lynn Fendler for comments and proofreading.

2 The *Course of Study* was first issued in March 1947 and then has been modified and reissued every ten or eleven years. The newest version was promulgated in 1989 and enforced in 1993.

3 Although there are many different schools of Karl Marx's theory, I do not make distinctions here, because it is seems to me that their basic arguments are much the same.

4 Unlike in the United States where there are some self-styled Marxian educators, educators in Japan who do not call themselves Marxist. Therefore, I define Marxian educators in Japan not by what they have claimed by themselves or how they have been labeled by others, but by my own interpretation of Marx's theories.

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